

VZCZCXRO4677
PP RUEHDE RUEHDIR
DE RUEHMK #0169/01 0531330
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 221330Z FEB 07
FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6454
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 1300
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MANAMA 000169

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EB/CBA FOR DENNIS WINSTEAD, NEA/ARPI
COMMERCE FOR TYLER HOFFMAN AND TOM SAMS
ABU DHABI FOR FCS CHRISTIAN REED

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [BEXP](#) [ABUD](#) [AMGT](#) [BTIO](#) [ECON](#) [EINV](#) [ETRD](#) [BA](#)
SUBJECT: BAHRAIN: BFIF FY07 PROPOSAL

REF: 06 STATE 189849

Commercial Strategy

¶1. Embassy Manama welcomes EB's offer to provide BFIF funding to enhance commercial advocacy efforts. In view of the August 2006 implementation of the U.S. - Bahrain Free Trade Agreement (FTA), Post emphasizes the importance of commercial training, providing commercial services to businesses seeking to capitalize on trade opportunities presented by the FTA, outreach to businesses on FTA opportunities, increasing U.S. investor awareness and confidence, and supporting the enhanced effectiveness of the AmCham. As a non-CS post, Embassy Manama would utilize FY07 Business Facilitation Incentive Funds in a "shadow" training project with Embassy Amman colleagues, production of an informational Free Trade Agreement booklet, and office equipment to support the fledgling local AmCham. The estimated BFIF expenditures for FY07 are \$7,250.

Commercial Training

¶2. The Econ/Commercial Officer would travel to Jordan to shadow Embassy Amman FCS staff over a three-day period. The objective of such training is for the Econ/Commercial Officer to study the best practices of Commercial personnel experienced in administering Free Trade Agreement-related commercial services, with the goal of replicating these practices at Embassy Manama. This project would also tend to strengthen coordination with regional colleagues, and generally enhance commercial plans and strategies for Bahrain in FY07-08.

¶3. The benefits of this proposal would likely accrue to other regional posts as well. Embassy Manama already serves as an informational and advisory resource for other Posts in the Gulf whose host nations are at varying stages of negotiating or implementing Free Trade Agreements with the U.S. As the USG proceeds toward the attainment of a Middle East Free Trade Area by 2013, the need for the USG foreign affairs community to develop and refine FTA implementation practices will grow. This project will support the development of effective FTA implementation practices. Post point of contact is Steve Simpson, Economic/Commercial Officer, tel. 973 1724-2986, fax. 973 1727-3011, and email: simpsonsc@state.gov. Total estimated cost for travel, lodging and MI&E is \$2500.

Production of FTA Booklet

14. Post Econ/Commercial office would commission the production of a booklet on the FTA. It would be available for electronic distribution as well. Both American and Bahraini business officials agree there is a continuing lack of understanding when it comes to the benefits of the FTA and how to best capitalize on the opportunities it presents. With Department of Commerce input on the content, Post would like to produce a booklet to bridge this knowledge gap. Post point of contact is Steve Simpson, Economic/Commercial Officer, tel. 973 1724-2986, fax. 973 1727-3011, and email: simpsonsc@state.gov. The total estimated production cost for 1500 copies is \$2000.

Computer Equipment and Software for AmCham

15. Post donated a laptop and printer under a previous BFIF grant and AmCham staff report that they are putting it to good use, relying on it heavily for off-site events. However, AmCham personnel have recently noted that the performance of the existing laptop has declined. In addition, the AmCham has recently hired an Assistant Administrator who could make productive use of additional computer equipment. The local AmCham is a growing organization and is also a natural recipient of increasing attention due to the recently-implemented FTA. Post seeks to improve the AmCham's office computing resources and requests allocation of \$2,000 for a new laptop computer and an additional \$750 for appropriate business software and a firewall/antivirus security suite. Post point of contact is

MANAMA 00000169 002 OF 002

Steve Simpson, Economic/Commercial Officer, tel. 973 1724-2986, fax. 973 1727-3011, and email: simpsonsc@state.gov. Total estimated cost is \$2,750.

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<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/manama/>

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